

Next issue:
October 6-7

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island’s Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044



Judy Berdy
Southpoint was transformed into “St. Adonis Cemetery” last week for filming of *Zoolander*, starring Ben Stiller. Additional photos on Website NYC10044 at www.nyc10044.com.

In a Raucous Common Council Session, an Issue of Personality

Personality became an issue last week at the Residents Association (RIRA) Common Council’s monthly meeting – specifically, that of Council member Joyce Mincheff, who took a 40-minute verbal drubbing from RIRA President Patrick Stewart and four of her fellow Councilors.

The episode began early in the meeting, during consideration of past meeting minutes, when Mincheff twice interrupted First Vice President Joan Christianson. Mincheff had refused, during a term as Secretary from which she resigned recently, to supply minutes to a Common Council meeting, describing her action as a protest against RIRA President Patrick Stewart’s accepting a Governor-appointed position on the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC).

Christianson was just starting a statement saying that “people who sat in these [Common Council] seats long before us worked very hard to get the President of RIRA on the RIOC Board.” Mincheff interrupted, seeking, she later told *The WIRE*, to make the point that the hard work was to get the RIRA President on the RIOC Board by virtue of his office, not in a seat that might render him beholden to the Governor for the appointment.

After Mincheff’s first interruption, Christianson responded, “Excuse me, I’m speaking. Please.” Mincheff said something more, and

Stewart told her, “You’re out of order.” When Christianson started again and Mincheff interrupted again, Christianson showed anger.

“You know what? Really, I’m not... I’m going to ask Joyce to leave. I don’t need this. I’m trying to say something. I’m not going to be interrupted a hundred times... If you can’t be controlled, I really would like you to leave, because I’m not going to sit here and be insulted throughout the meeting.” Then, speaking to the Council, Christianson continued, “So it’s her or me. Because I’m not going to sit here and listen to this. I’m not. I’m not going to be interrupted. And nobody else at these tables should have to be.”

Several Council members urged Christianson to continue with her statement. “Good. I’ll finish. But then I’m leaving if she doesn’t. I’m not going through this anymore.”

Christianson then continued her statement through two further spontaneous interjections – these of a supportive nature from Shirley Margolin:

“People fought for many years to get the President of RIRA to sit on the [RIOC] Board.” (Margolin: “Right.”) “...to be automatically on the Board. Since the administration, the Governor, or whoever, failed to do that, we fought other ways to get our President on that Board, whether as an appointee from the Mayor of New York or

See **RIRA**, page 6



Website NYC10044
Joyce Mincheff, who represents Eastwood on the RIRA Common Council, was the subject of a 40-minute diversion in last week’s Council meeting.

Chase Staying Until July 2001 Will Open Two Days a Week; Other Banks Interested

Chase Bank will shift to a two-day-a-week schedule in one month, scrapping a plan to close the Island branch in October. Meanwhile, RIOC is making progress in its quest for a replacement banking institution.

“RIOC has already met with and shown the site to two banks, both of which expressed interest,” RIOC President Robert Ryan told *The WIRE* on Wednesday. “At this point, we know of at least seven other institutions that have expressed interest, and hopefully we’ll have a new tenant to serve the Island within the next few weeks.” Ryan praised Chase for its willingness to stay until July, 2001, and to work with RIOC and the State Banking Department in seeking a new bank. He had earlier commended Judy Berdy and other residents for a letter-writing effort that helped.

A letter Chase sent to its customers said ATM machines at the Roosevelt Island branch will be available 24 hours a day, but teller-window hours will be Mondays and Wednesdays only, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. starting Monday, October 23.

Ed Kramer, State Deputy Superintendent of Banks, who runs its Consumer Services Division, told *The WIRE*, “Our role was to have some constructive discussions with the bank.” He added, “Chase is to be applauded for re-evaluating the situation and for work-

ing with the Roosevelt Island folks and us toward finding a longer-term solution.” RIOC President Robert Ryan has sent out letters seeking a different bank to operate an Island branch.

Judy Miller, speaking for Chase, said that customer research had revealed that most people who bank at Chase’s Roosevelt Island branch also do their banking regularly at other Chase branches in the City. Chase also encourages its customers to bank on-line, even paying bills, through www.chase.com.

Chase’s letter to depositors said it will continue to work with community leaders, RIOC, and the State Banking Department to find another bank for the Island.

Correction

In a story last issue on pre-school-age enrollments at the Day Nursery, Island Kids, and PS 217, *The WIRE* misreported tuition at the Day Nursery. With an available subsidy, it is \$5,500 per year (not per semester). Enrollment numbers for the Day Nursery were also incorrect. Two letters on page 2 clarify the facts.

Special Meeting October 4

RIRA Considering Another Ballot Question on an Elected RIOC Board

Whether the November 7 Residents Association ballot will carry an advisory referendum question on a locally-elected Board of Directors for the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) will be considered Wednesday night, October 4, by the Residents Association Common Council. The meeting will start at 8:00 p.m. in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd (lower level). It is open to the public.

The Common Council entertained the ballot question at its monthly meeting last week, but when time ran short and a straw vote revealed that a motion to put the question on the ballot would probably fail by one or two votes, it postponed further discussion until the special meeting October 4.

The question would ask residents whether they would prefer a RIOC Board with a majority of elected Island residents rather than one composed entirely of appointees who serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The mostly-elected Board would be empowered to hire professional civic management, replacing the Governor-appointed President of RIOC.

While the proposed ballot question is both advisory and largely philosophical, it arises from legislation introduced in the last session of the State Legislature by Senator Olga Mendez and Assemblymember Pete Grannis. The bill was still pending when the Legislative session ended.

A similar ballot question scored a 92% approval among residents two years ago, giving impetus to the efforts to find a workable formula for a RIOC Board with a majority of members elected by residents. Under all forms of the legislation considered thus far, such a Board would be empowered to find and hire a professional civic manager, who would replace the politically-appointed President of RIOC as

primary Island administrator.

Under the version of the legislation most recently considered, the State would have responsibility for all Island capital needs over a specific “ceiling” figure – a kind of insurance-policy “deductible.” In Mendez’s version, the ceiling is set at \$500,000; Grannis’s version puts

RIOC.) However, the idea is relatively new, and there has been no specific plan negotiated among residents, City, and State.

RIRA President Patrick Stewart expressed opposition to putting the question before residents, calling it “financially irresponsible” for residents to choose local election of the

The Proposed Referendum Question

I favor democracy

I urge immediate passage of legislation that grants residents of Roosevelt Island the right to elect a majority of the RIOC Board of Directors, replacing the current system in which the entire Board is composed of non-elected members appointed by the Governor.

Professional Management

I understand that the new Board will select, hire, and direct professional management to run Roosevelt Island.

Financial Responsibility

I understand that the State has provided no funds to Roosevelt Island for four years, and that passage of such legislation may or may not change the Island’s financial condition.

YES__ NO__

it at \$200,000. Below the ceiling, the new democratically-elected RIOC Board and its professional manager would be responsible for budgeting the necessary funds from Island income derived from ground rents and other on-Island sources such as Motorgate fees.

Questions arising at last week’s RIRA meeting included the possibility of adding a second referendum question on possible New York City takeover of the Island. (While City property, the Island is presently leased to the State and, under the supervision of the State Department of Housing and Community Renewal [DHCR], is run by

RIOC Board when “forty million dollars in infrastructure repairs are needed.” Stewart said the legislation would cut off State support for the Island. He also pointed out that the State has not provided a subsidy for the Island for some four years. (The version of the referendum question under discussion had cited a three-year period.)

The financial question may prove decisive in whether the RIRA Council puts the issue on the November ballot. Even though it is only advisory, Stewart argues that if it led to democratic election of the RIOC Board, that Board would

See **Question**, page 6

Pages of Thought and Opinion

Let the People Decide

The RIRA Common Council will meet a week from Wednesday to make a decision:

Will residents have the opportunity, on November 7, to express their sentiments about the Island’s future?

In any other community in America, the question would be absurdly incongruous. The answer would be, “Of course they get to decide. They live in a democracy.”

But **democracy** is the very question proposed for the November 7 ballot: *Should this Island be managed democratically, like every other community in the country?* The irony is that it’s only advisory. It’s a chance, if given by the RIRA Common Council, for residents to express their collective view that the State of New York’s politically-appointed RIOC Board and President should give way to a locally-elected RIOC Board empowered to hire professional civic management for Roosevelt Island.

Why would RIRA, even for a moment, refuse to allow residents an opportunity to register an advisory vote in favor of democracy?

The answer is *fear*.

RIRA President Patrick Stewart has expressed the fear that if residents say *Yes* to democracy and State government responds by granting it, the State may then stop giving Roosevelt Island a financial subsidy. But (*Hello?!?*) State support ended over three years ago when George Pataki’s administration cavalierly declared Roosevelt Island economically “self-sufficient,” and stopped the flow of State funds to the Island.

Residents here don’t see even a dime’s worth of services from their State taxes. Islanders are cheated, even of that.

A democratically-elected RIOC Board of Directors would continue to manage this Island, but through a professional civic manager working for the elected Board and, therefore, for the people. RIOC would continue as a public benefit corporation. The key difference would be that professional management would clearly identify the Island’s needs, make that information public, and an effort could then be mounted (rather than suppressed) to seek the funds the Island needs and – under the Lease between City and State – deserves.

What’s more, Senator Olga Mendez and Assemblymember Pete Grannis have agreed that legislation granting locally-elected democratic rule to Roosevelt Island must contain a financial safety net – a specific figure above which the State will be required to cover extraordinarily high funding needs.

What about an alternative notion – getting the City to get the State to let the City take back Roosevelt Island? The problem is that it is merely a notion, and the long stretch of time that would be required to get that idea even past the 50-yard line would be enough time for Roosevelt Island to be further ruined by truly bad and unresponsive management. What’s more, it’s an idea that can still be explored – and more freely and effectively – once a democratically-elected RIOC Board is in place.

In the real-world present, then, let’s do the right democratic thing: ***Let the people express their will at the ballot box.***

Is RIRA Worth Saving?

In one word: **Yes**. But a Common Council meeting reported in this issue of *The WIRE* might lead one to wonder.

A handful of members of the Common Council of the Residents Association felt wholly justified in spending the better part of an hour putting down Joyce Mincheff. In response to two brief interruptions, they squandered valuable time by piling on excessively when simple parliamentary procedure, properly used, would have controlled the situation.

Actually, Common Councilors interrupt one another a lot, and Patrick Stewart, who chairs the meetings by virtue of his position as RIRA President, allows it. Even the transcript of last week’s session shows it (www.nyc10044.com/wire/2102/riratan.html). Mincheff actually got skewered largely for “attitude” observed in past meetings.

Control of the proceedings is the responsibility of the Chair. Stewart has given up on Mincheff, but also makes no effort to restrain others who throw in friendly interjections and sometimes escalate their non-parliamentary exchanges into shouting matches. That sets a pattern.

The Chair must set the standard, and then enforce it evenhandedly.

RIRA is worth saving, despite abandoned intentions and meetings that are too often allowed to degenerate into titanic debacles, because RIRA is all the democracy Roosevelt Islanders have. And when locally-elected democratic management one day becomes a reality, a small elected RIOC Board will need RIRA’s pulse of the community – the kind of broad feedback that gives life to democracy.

DL

Letters

To the Editor:

The WIRE needs to fact-check its articles. The September 9 article on the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery and alternative programs for preschoolers written by Anusha Shrivastava was full of misinformation and inaccurate quotes and is a serious disservice to your readers.

I would like to correct the facts. (1) *The WIRE* reported that only six four-year-olds were enrolled. I told Ms. Shrivastava that the Day Nursery has openings for six more children and currently has 21 full day four-year-old children enrolled in the full-day PreK and 32 three-year-olds enrolled in part and full-time programs. (2) The tuition of \$7,700 quoted in the article is for the entire school year from September to June, not for a semester. All four-year-olds enrolled in the full-day PreK receive the Board of Education subsidy, which reduces tuition to \$5,550 and further financial aid is made available to those who qualify.

As for the way I am quoted, I think Ms. Shrivastava tries to convey the gist of what I say but puts her own words into quotation marks to make it look as if I said exactly what she writes. I’d like to offer some facts to correct the misquotes.

(1) The NYC Board of Education is funding community-based organizations so that they can offer alternatives that the NYC public schools are not currently offering. The funds that are being made available to the Day Nursery for Roosevelt Island families are for subsidized full-day programs. Roosevelt Island families can now have free half-day PreK at P.S. 217 or full-day PreK at the Day Nursery.

(2) I do not believe that the main reason families are not using the school is because rents have gone up in Manhattan Park. Middle income families have many obligations and often find that they must make difficult choices, including forgoing preschool. I certainly never said anything so flippant as suggesting that parents “figure that their child can wait another year before going to a private school or for a full-day program.”

(3) I clearly told Ms. Shrivastava that the aim of the PreK programs at both the public school and at the Day Nursery are the same: to promote emotional, social and cognitive development. The main difference is that we offer a full-day program. I do not have a clue as to what she means by the “variegated segment that we serve.”

We hoped an article in *The WIRE* would provide valuable information to parents who were still searching for programs for their children, but this article has, unfortunately, conveyed a very false impression about the school. We urge you to correct this.

Sara Seiden

To the Editor:

We are parents writing in response to the article by Anusha Shrivastava in the September 9 issue of *The WIRE* about the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery, P.S. 217 and Island Kids. Roosevelt Island parents are fortunate to have a full range of options for their children. They can make different choices based on their own philosophies, finances and child-care needs. But it is important that parents receive accurate information about the various programs so that they can make an informed decision for their children.

There were two problems with the most recent *WIRE* story. First, many of the facts about the Day Nursery were wrong and, in a separate letter in this issue of *The WIRE*, Sara Seiden has corrected these mistakes. The second is that the unique contribution of the Day Nursery to the development of children on Roosevelt Island was lost. The authors of this letter, who represent the four most recent chairpersons of the Day Nursery’s Board, as well as other concerned Board officers and parents, are writing to highlight the Day Nursery’s distinctive qualities.

First and foremost, we want to emphasize that the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery and P.S. 217 are educational institutions. Sara Seiden, Director of the Day Nursery, and Sherry Gregory, Principal of P.S. 217, are experienced, trained professionals in their field. The teachers at the Day Nursery and P.S. 217 have graduate degrees and are State-certified. Island Kids’ Learning Group is a children’s program run by parents and is not interchangeable with a professionally-run, licensed early-childhood program.

The article reduces a parent’s choice to one of finances without explaining what a private nursery school tuition buys for a child. First, it buys a teacher with a graduate-school education, fully trained to use teaching strategies in order to accommodate each and every child’s individual language, social, cognitive and

This letter continued on page 6; see **Nursery** Additional letters, page 3

Letters deadline for Oct. 7 issue: Oct. 1

Letters received after deadline will be considered on a space-available basis

Joseph Lynch, Commissioner
Dept. of Housing and Community Renewal
27 Beaver Street, 7th floor
New York, NY 10004

Dear Commissioner Lynch:

The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation is preparing to enter into a contract to lease out property over which it does not have control.

Based on the Restated Ground Lease of November 3, 1977 between Urban Development Corporation and Rivercross Tenants Corporation, RIOC does not control the rights to portions of the space that it plans to lease to developer Diane Wilson; those rights remain with Rivercross Tenants Corporation.

In 1977, this Restated Ground Lease transferred a portion of the Rivercross building from Rivercross Tenants Corporation to UDC. That portion became the Rivercross Minischool.

Now RIOC is offering to lease a portion of Rivercross to Ms. Diane Wilson for conversion to condominium housing. Ms. Wilson has proposed additions to the building on the ground floor adjacent to the former school building and at the second floor atop the roof of the former school building. Some of these additions go beyond the portion of the building that was transferred to UDC, and thus are not within RIOC’s control.

In the Restated Ground Lease, the portion of Rivercross that was transferred from Rivercross Tenants Corporation to UDC is called School Unit “A.” School Unit “A” is defined in that Lease as the one-story school building plus the air rights above, excluding a portion of those air rights that is also below a Rivercross tower.

One portion of the proposed development that would violate the Lease is the second-story addition to the northernmost proposed Rivercross condominium unit. Within the air rights allotted to School Unit “A” there is perhaps enough height in which to construct the minimum allowable seven-and-a-half-foot high master bedroom for that unit. Constructing a higher master bedroom up to the underside of the Rivercross apartment above, as proposed, would go above the eight-foot-high air rights.

A second portion of the proposed development that would violate the Lease is the one-story addition at grade to the southernmost Rivercross unit. The land on which this addition is proposed is not included in the definition of School Unit “A” and is not available to RIOC to be leased to Ms. Wilson.

Separately, please be aware, as I advised President Robert H. Ryan in a letter June 8, that according to Steve Rocklin of the Division of Code Enforcement and Administration of the New York Department of State, portions of the project at Rivercross (first and second northernmost units) and at Island House (first, second and third northernmost units) cause a fire-spread hazard and violate paragraph 738.4(3) of Subchapter B of Chapter 1 of Subtitle S of the Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York, entitled *Prevention of Exterior Fire Spread*.

Marc Diamond
Resident member, Capital Planning and Development Committee

Hon. George E. Pataki, Governor
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Pataki:

The other night there was one of the few evening RIOC meetings on Roosevelt Island. After the public portion of the session, in which many questions were asked, the meeting continued and then adjourned without any of the questions answered.

When asked about this, Stephen Hicks announced that the RIOC Board is not required to answer any of our questions and then walked out. I have never witnessed such insulting and offensive behavior. I do not believe that any constituent anywhere in the State of New York would ever be treated in this manner except for Roosevelt Island, which has clearly come under the rule of a dictatorship.

As I sat there, I felt how Jews must have felt in Nazi Germany when all their rights were taken away from them: frustrated, mistreated, ignored and angry. Shame on Mr. Hicks. Shame on you for allowing such disgusting behavior to continue.

Vicki Feinmel

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters to the Editor, to the community, and to/from officials, and will consider publication on a *Name Withheld* basis, but the writer’s name, address, and phone number must be provided. All letters subject to acceptance, and may be edited for length and clarity. **Preferred methods of submission: PC-standard 3.5-inch floppy disk left at 531 Main St. for *The WIRE*, or by e-mail to nyc10044@rcn.com** (ASCII text preferred or use any wordprocessing software). Alternatives: Typed, double-spaced copy left at 531 Main St. or faxed to (212) **755-2540**. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered. We cannot take telephone dictation of letters.

The Main Street **WIRE** **CARIBBEAN CRUISE**

Sailing Feb.10, 2001 from Ft. Lauderdale

We still have some cabins available, but Celebrity Cruise Lines has told Liberty Travel, our agent, that they cannot guarantee our exceptional low price of \$853 per person for an inside cabin after September 25.

Yes, that price is for seven days aboard The Century, one of the most luxurious ships afloat, and includes port charges. We will have stops in San Juan, St. Thomas, St. Maarten and Nassau in the Bahamas.

We know it is early to be thinking about winter, but cold weather is not too far away. Think about February in New York and then think about seven days basking in the warmth of the Caribbean with all your meals and entertainment paid for. Enjoy wonderful cuisine in elegant surroundings – with two desserts if you choose! Afraid of putting on weight with all that fabulous dining? There is a low-calorie menu at each meal that will keep your weight down without sacrificing taste or satisfaction.

Seasoned cruise fans will know that the exercise facilities on The Century are state-of-the-art, with a multitude of treadmills, steppers, stationary bikes, and other equipment. Eat what you want and then exercise those calories away!

Join our group for a private champagne sail-away party while our beautiful ship leaves the port of Ft. Lauderdale as the sun is declining over the water. That will be just a prelude to night after night of extraordinary Caribbean sunsets.

Single? We have other single passengers with whom you can share a cabin. Don't stay home just because you don't have a roommate. Unlike ship-assigned roommates, you can meet your cabin mate ahead of time to determine compatibility, since we all live or work on Roosevelt Island.

Call Jim Baehler at 752-6463 for the cruise brochure and full details.



Public Safety Blotter

Over the past month, two months of blotter material (mid-July to mid-September) have been released to *the WIRE* by RIOC, delayed by a personnel change. It is too extensive to be included in the newspaper, but is available in full on *Website NYC10044* at www.nyc10044.com/wire/2102/blot2102.html.

COMING UP

Compiled by Alain Pinset – phone and fax 208-2907
e-mail alpinset@cs.com

Mon., Sept. 25, deadline for guaranteed low price on *The WIRE's Caribbean Cruise*. Call Jim Baehler 752-6463 for details.

Mon., Sept. 25, 7:30 p.m., **Maple Tree Group** meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. (Next meeting, Oct. 30.)

October, Rivercross Window Gallery, **A Vacation in Italy** in Digital C prints by Niguel Long, photographer and artist.

Wed., Oct. 4, **Special Session** of the **Common Council** of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, 8:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd (lower level), to consider advisory referendum question, for the November ballot, on local election of the RIOC Board of Directors. Public welcome.

Sat., Oct. 7, next scheduled issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Sept. 29; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Oct. 2; bag materials due Thur., Oct. 5. **Future issues:** October 21; November 4, 18 (Thanksgiving business cards issue); December 2, 16 (Holiday issue); January 13, 27, 2001; February 10, 24; March 10, 24; April 7, 21; May 5, 19; June 2, 30 (July 4 business cards issue); August 4, then every two weeks starting early in September. Advertisers wishing to be included in unscheduled **EXTRA** editions, *without notice at the time*, are invited to call 826-9055 to make their interest known. **Phone/fax** for news, 826-9055/755-2540; urgent/breaking news, 917-353-1647; phone/fax for advertising inquiries, 751-8214/755-2540; phone/fax to list Island events here (no charge), 317-8523.

Wed., October 11, 8:00 p.m., **Residents Association Common Council Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Sat., Oct. 14, 7:30 p.m., **Jazz Concert**, The New York Septet, Chapel of the Good Shepherd, with Roosevelt Island's composer/trumpeter Tex Allen, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. \$12; seniors, \$10.

Sun., Oct. 22, **RIRSD Champagne Party**, 5-7 p.m., Manhattan Park Theater Club. For tickets and details, call 688-8907.

Wed., Nov. 8, Residents Association *Common Council Meeting*, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Wed., Dec. 6, Residents Association *Common Council Meeting*, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Norma Simon

Norma Simon, an active participant in Roosevelt Island Senior Association (RISA) activities, died September 8 at New York University Hospital. She was 83 years old.



She was born in Poland and emigrated to the United States, at age 6, in 1923. She moved to Roosevelt Island 17 years ago after living in Rockaway Beach with her late husband, George.

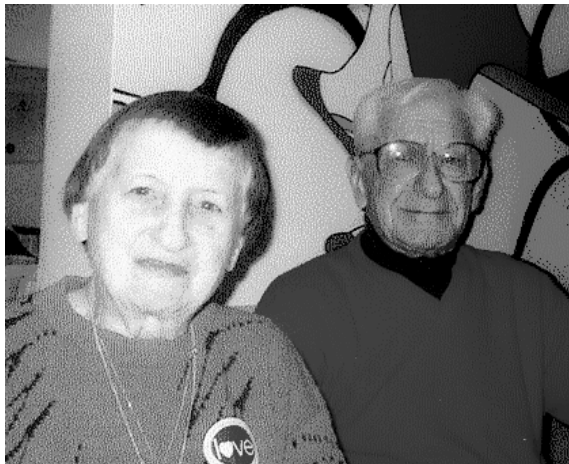
She worked for many years as a bookkeeper and office manager before retiring. After moving to the Island, she became active in RISA, serving several terms as President

or Treasurer. She also joined Island residents in tackling numerous community issues, including marching at the Tram to protest changes in service.

She is survived by two daughters, Andrea Simon of Manhattan and Barbara Hoffmann, who resides in Maryland.

A memorial service will be held at the Senior Center, 546 Main Street, on Sunday, September 24, at 3:00 p.m.

Debra Mount Cornet



Michael Kolinsky (Kolins)

Michael Kolins died Monday, September 11. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Ruth (in photograph), two sons, and a daughter-in-law. He was a New York native and, with his wife, a 24-year Island resident.

He worked as a Ladies Cutter, specializing in plaid. He retired after his first heart attack when asked to cut solids because it was too boring and a step down. He is described as a good judge of character, a quiet man who treated everyone with respect and never insulted anybody.

Hospital Security May Change

The City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) is accepting bids from private companies to provide security staff at its 20 City hospitals. An HHC official said Thursday the move would save over \$10 million a year. "The current staff are HHC employees and unionized. We have thought long and hard about the change to a private agency. In the current competitive environment, we have to increase efficiency and this move is going to help towards achieving that end," she said.

Some residents of the Island's hospitals are not impressed, concerned that they will not get the level of security they are used to. "Ninety-eight per cent of the hospital residents are not going to feel safe if they bring in private security personnel," said Gilchrist Bowman, the President of the Resident Council. "The current

hospital police are trained, know the problems of the patients and can tackle emotional outbursts. The new people may not be well-trained. We will not know which walk of life they come from. They will be working for less money and may be picked up off the street. They will be working for the minimum wage. They will not care about us."

"These fears are completely unfounded. The welfare and safety of patients is our biggest concern," said the HHC official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "We would never take a step to undermine the security of our patients, or jeopardize them in any way. A lot of time and effort has gone into this decision and a lot more will go into choosing the right agency."

"This is our only home and we would not feel safe if we are not familiar with the staff here," said Sterlie Wilson, a member of the Community Advisory Board at Coler and the Chair of the Patient Care Committee. "Arguments and fights break out all the time. People here have attitudes. They squabble over cigarettes and people kicking wheelchairs. People could snap anytime. We have been through a lot of physical and emotional trauma. We want to feel safe. We like the current hospital staff."

"Sometimes change is a hard thing for people to accept," said the HHC official.

Anusha Shrivastava

Letters

To Kaie at Trellis:

Thank you for bringing us the joy of music, as weather permitted, during warm weekend nights of summer. The music, our lovely outdoor scenery, family and friends, lifted our spirits and inspired a feeling of a special little town.

Please continue in summers to come.

Nurit Marcus

To the Editor:

Hurrah for *The Main Street WIRE* and the courage to seek the services of an Ombudsman! Armand Schwab has had a distinguished career in the press. His demonstrated even-handed intelligence will be an even more valuable asset to the Community in the Ombudsman role for *The WIRE*.

Wouldn't it be great to have an effective New York State Ombudsman to whom the beleaguered Island residents might turn? It would be such a refreshing difference from the present RIOC position of "The State agency responsible for setting policy for the life of the Island does not wish to answer questions from the people who live on the Island."

Will we ever gain the right to make our own decisions about the place in which we live? Is it so wrong to want to live in a democracy?

David Bauer

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Senior Center

Monday

9:15, **Stay Well** exercise
10:00, **English as 2nd Language**
(Beginner's session at 10:00,
Intermediate session at 11:00)
12:45, **Arts & Crafts** (RIDA)

Tuesday

10:00, **Jazzercise**
10:00, **Beaded Jewelry Wkshp**
1:30 p.m., **Games** (RISA)

Wednesday

9:15, **Stay Well** (stretch)
10:00, **English as 2nd Language**
(Beginners' session at 10:00,
Intermediate session at 11:00.)
7:00 p.m., **Glee Club** (RISA)

Thursday

10:00, **Tai Chi**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**

Friday

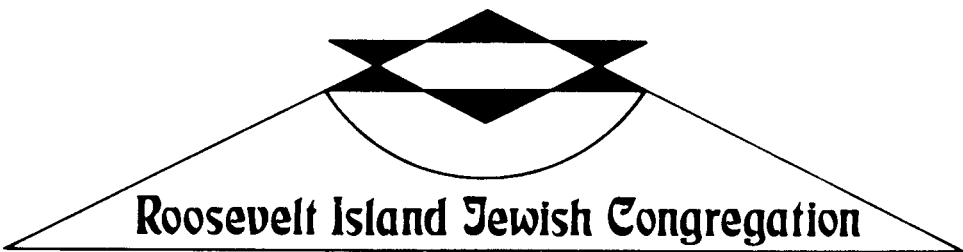
10:30, **Blood Pressure Screening**
11:00, **Citizenship Class**
7:30 p.m., **Games** (RISA)
Saturday
7:30 p.m., **Bingo** (RISA)

Special Events

Oct. 4, **Senior Issues** with
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Oct. 9, 11-12:30, **Metrocard Bus**
Oct. 16, 1:30-2:30, **Flu Shots**

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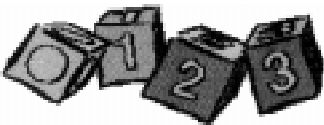
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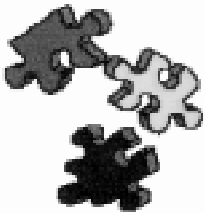
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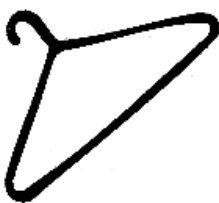
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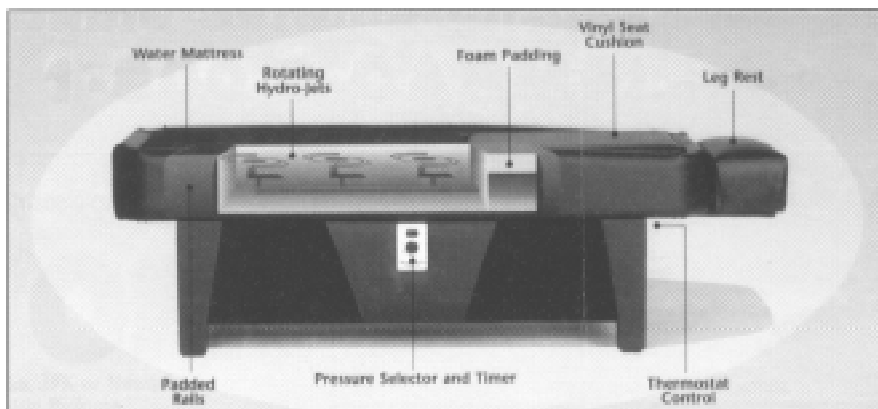
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Isa Abdul

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Grade 5
Grades 6 and 7
Confirmation

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Deora Novell
William Holland

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The Main Street WIRE relies on many Island volunteers to fill important roles in the distribution process, and there's a role for **you** if you're willing to help. On Fridays, when *The WIRE* comes off the press, we have a stuffing crew at work from about 10:00 a.m. to about 1:45 p.m. (lunch is provided). Later on Fridays (and early Saturday), volunteers deliver the newspaper to every apartment door on the Island, as well as to merchants, the hospitals, and other locations. It's an important service to the community, satisfying, and often fun. If you'd like to join this dedicated group, please call **935-6043**, or **935-7534**, or 826-9055. (Leave your number if a machine answers, and we'll call you back.)

The WIRE and *Website NYC10044* also seek news and feature writers. Call 826-9055.

RIRA from page 1

whether he just got on there because of the seat that he sits in right now. It doesn't matter. He's there as our representative. You don't want to realize that? That's your problem; that's not mine. I just want to state that he belongs in the seat he's sitting in... Now I will leave."

Various members of the Common Council urged Christianson to stay, and when the meeting agenda was changed to allow Principal Sherry Gregory of PS 217 to make a presentation before further consideration of minutes of past meetings, she did stay – but then left, saying, "I apologize to everybody for my outburst before, but I am excusing myself from this meeting. I will not sit in on one more meeting where I or anybody else is going to be constantly interrupted by Ms. Mincheff, so I am excusing myself now from this meeting. As long as she is remaining, I am leaving."

The next 40 minutes of the Common Council meeting were spent on Mincheff, while she sat listening. (A transcript of this portion of the meeting is available on *Website NYC10044* www.nyc10044.com.) Typical comments:

- **Stewart:** "Ms. Mincheff has clearly been out of order, continues to be out of order, [and] should be called for that, and we should ask that she leave. ... I'd rather have one person leave than all of us leave when she is destroying the integrity of this organization and I, for one, am insulted by it, and hope everybody else is insulted by it. If they're not, there's something wrong." Stewart later referred to "21 people being held hostage by one person."
- **Dierdre Breslin:** "As a person who was branded a 'liar' [by Mincheff] at a public meeting, I find it very difficult to be involved in this... I would have to abstain because I am tremendously personally involved in this kind of behavior, and I will once again say, 'street fight behavior.'"
- **Kitty Berman:** "There's no point in sitting here, being part of

Question from page 1

have no access to financial resources at the level required to deal with the Island's needs. Those favoring the ballot question say, on the other hand, that the only significant changes would be election of a majority of the RIOC Board and the hiring of professional management, arguing that a largely-elected RIOC Board would ask for and accept State funding, while the present appointed Board and RIOC management has not accepted State funding and has not demanded restoration of a Roosevelt Island line item in the State budget.

If the advisory referendum question is put on the Residents Association ballot, it would be voted on by residents (including non-citizens of the U.S.) on November 7, at the same time as the nation-wide general election.

a quorum, when we are victimized time after time... Every month we are subjected to somebody being pilloried or annoyed or yelled at because of one or two people who cannot seem to control themselves. I would like to leave and I hope some of you will come out with me." (Berman stayed.)

- **Audrey Berman:** "We may have disagreements from time to time... but to badger the witness and make people feel that they're a witness, constantly, is unacceptable... I don't know that Joyce has gotten to the point yet, in this meeting, where she should be dismissed from this meeting, so I'm uncomfortable making a resolution [to expel] based on tonight's activities, although if one is using past minutes and activity, I would certainly support such a motion."
 - **Rhoda Jacklin:** "It has happened at every meeting. It gets to a point where you don't even want to come down to a meeting because you know it's going to wind up as an abusive name-calling contest here..."
- No Council member rose to Mincheff's defense, though Jeffrey Hochman decried the nature of the discussion, and others urged get-

ting on with business:

- **Hochman:** "This group is becoming a bit immature in this, really, what it is, is a war between you [indicating Stewart] and Joyce." (Hochman himself was interrupted at that point by voices protesting that characterization. He then continued.) "One of the problems here is that everybody should give their opinion and everybody else should stay quiet. That's why these meetings go three, four hours. It's everybody's fault. Joyce has an opinion. She stated it. She may state it too many times, but she states it. (To Stewart:) She raises her hand a lot, and you don't pick her. You talk, she interrupts. It's stupid. It's immature, and we should just get over this and go on."
- **James Whalen:** "The point has been made. Let's get on with the meeting."
- **Byron Gaspard:** "I think that we can sit here all day long and point fingers and find fault... This is one of the things that has disturbed me for the last two years – that we spend so much time in personal attacks and very little time serving our community. Let's get on with the business."
- **Frank Farance:** "It's not going to do us any good to turn the temperature up on things right now, so if we could just... we have work to do tonight... Can we get to work?"
- **Ron Schuppert:** "Joyce and I have locked horns as much as anybody at this table..." (Interjection by Kitty Berman: "I know that.") "However, there are important things on this agenda. If you're feeling so intemperate toward Joyce that she..." At that point Schuppert was interrupted by several voices. Shirley Margolin said, "Don't use a word like that..." Schuppert pointed out that a two-thirds vote would be required to eject Mincheff from the meeting, and the votes were not there to do it.

Vicki Feinmel, a former Councilor who lost her seat when she moved from Eastwood to Island House, was later recognized during the public portion of the meeting. She effectively had the last word on the Mincheff matter in the meeting: "I just want it noted that I understand all your anger and frustration. I have seen so many

SPORTSWIRE

FOOTBALL The RI Youth Program has extended the registration period for its Flag Football program until September 30th. The program is open to youths age 11-16, and the games will be played primarily on Saturday afternoons beginning October 14th and continuing through the middle of December. Registration forms are available at the Youth Center at 506 Main Street.



New Benches were being installed by a RIOC crew Thursday afternoon at the west end of Good Shepherd Plaza.

times such inappropriate behavior, not only by Joyce. But it really goes both ways and all of you should look at yourselves occasionally and try seeing what you've done to add to this situa... Kitty, excuse me, exactly what you're doing [now] is provoking. OK? It's provoking. Exactly what you're doing. And this goes on all the time and obviously you don't care what you do, how that affects other people, but most of you at one time or another have also been inappropriate."

Recalling the incident this week, Christianson said, "Joyce is an intelligent woman who has a lot to offer, but I'm just tired of Joyce disrupting meetings so we get nothing done. I treat people with respect and I expect to be treated the same way. Unfortunately, Joyce is rude and arrogant, and feels that her point of view is the only one that should be heard."

With a week's perspective on the matter, Stewart gave *The WIRE* this

statement: "What can you do in a wholly volunteer organization with a person who cannot sit through a meeting without abrasively insulting someone? Ms. Mincheff's intelligence, while considerable, is entirely and consistently undermined by her emotions and lack of judgment. Once she is convinced that she is right – which is 99% of the time – she takes *Winning Through Intimidation* to an Olympic level, indulging in behavior that has no place anywhere in polite society, let alone in an elected public forum. Time after time the Council's business has been delayed, protracted, and even prevented by this one person on her whim alone."

Mincheff, when asked for comment by *The WIRE*, was unrepentant. She characterized the session this way: "Anybody who's ever been eight years old in a schoolyard knew what was going on in that meeting." She declined further comment.

Nursery from page 2

physical needs. A trained early childhood professional can nurture a child's independence while simultaneously supporting and encouraging growth and skill development. Each child learns how to interact with his or her peers, with adults, and to negotiate his or her own world. Each learns how to communicate his or her needs within a safe, structured, age-appropriate environment. Secondly, the Day Nursery provides a small student-teacher ratio, one head teacher and at least one assistant teacher for every class of 10-18 children, depending on their age. Thirdly, the school offers full-day programs, which are vital for many families. Further, the Board of Health makes sure that safety standards are maintained and, in fact, the school's exemplary facilities, strictly supervised by Sara, have met those standards for two decades.

What does the Day Nursery give to our community? The Day Nursery gives more than \$20,000 of financial aid each year, working to continue to meet the needs of parents in each and every building on this Island, and works with City agencies to access funding for families as well. Furthermore, its reputation among New York City private nursery schools is top-rate and its graduates go on to succeed in New York's best public and private schools. Finally, Sara is well known by both public and private schools in Manhattan. She is an amazing resource for those looking for schools in the City and special-needs programs.

Sara Seiden has positively affected children's lives on this Island for 21 years and the community should not fail to recognize the impact of that. She has also maintained the quality of her program through many changes in this community. Now, with more parents struggling to afford the program, she has worked hard to find ways to provide more scholarship funding. With the full support of the school's Parent Board of Directors, she has obtained a grant from RIOC and won the Board of Education's Universal Preschool Funding which will reduce the cost of the program for all four-year-olds. How could we not give her our full support and respect? The Roosevelt Island Day Nursery is an Island treasure which any parents with a child between the ages of two and four would do themselves a disservice not to investigate.

We hope that further articles about programs for children on Roosevelt Island would be fact-checked and be supportive of all existing programs, because the Island needs all of them.

Mimi Eingorn
Kristen Goldmansour
Anne Kubisch
Lauralee Schreiber
Donna Silbert



The cast and crew of Main Street Theatre's Equity production of *The Lion in Winter* posed for *The WIRE*'s camera after Saturday night's performance. Top, Thom Woodley and J.D. Zamfirescu; second row from top, Eric Winton, Worth Howe; third row from top, Kevin Gates, Gretchen Lustig, Nancy Howe, Joey Vehling; bottom, Matthew Davidowitz, Tom Dusenbury (director), Seth Resnick. Missing are composer/musical director Bob McDowell, scenic designer Elizabeth Gates, and Hanna Jamal. Additional production photos, in color, on *Website NYC10044* www.nyc10044.com.

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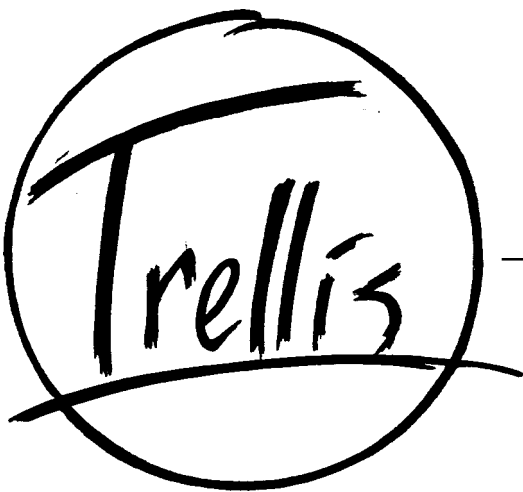
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